

HOUSE RESOLUTION 198

By Harwell

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the members of Christ Church upon the occasion of their 50th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pay tribute to the dedicated members of those exemplary religious organizations that have stood the test of time; and

WHEREAS, the members of Christ Church are most assuredly one such extraordinary group of people who are deserving of special praise and commendation; and

WHEREAS, on May 7th of this year, the church's congregation will celebrate their 50 years of positive influence in the community and the many different mission points by which they have helped to carry the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, the celebration will be a time to reflect on the past, give thanks for the present, and eagerly anticipate the future; and

WHEREAS, on this momentous occasion, the congregation will also be celebrating 50 years of sterling service rendered by the pastor, L. H. Hardwick, Jr., in addition to the 50th wedding anniversary of Pastor Hardwick and his devoted wife, Montelle; and

WHEREAS, the Christ Church has weathered life's storms for half a century and continues to pursue the higher calling of God in Christ Jesus; and

WHEREAS, with an unwavering faith in God, J.O. Wallace and his wife, Mary, organized a small congregation on the south side of Nashville in the Woodbine community under the direction of J.O.'s father, J.W. Wallace, pastor of the West Nashville Pentecostal Church; and

WHEREAS, the new church purchased its first property at the corner of Rose and Sadler Streets; and

WHEREAS, fifteen months later, the church went through its first major change when Reverend Wallace was called to other ministries. Young L. H. Hardwick, Jr., replaced Mr. Wallace as the pastor at the tender age of 18, and he is still graciously serving the membership at Christ Church in this capacity; and

WHEREAS, as the congregation continued steadily to grow, a new piece of property was purchased by Christ Church in 1957; services were held in a basement until 1963, when they constructed a building to seat 250 people; and

WHEREAS, in an aggressive effort to increase Sunday School attendance and raise money, the church began running their bus routes with renovated school buses; during this time, the members pooled their resources and sold donuts, cakes, and plate lunches, collected bottle caps and did whatever else they could to pay for their new facilities; and

WHEREAS, though at times these challenges seemed overwhelming, the congregation at Christ Church was able to carry on, knowing they were being used by the Lord to lead a growing community of Christian families; and

WHEREAS, by 1972, the church had outgrown its current facilities and started looking at property southeast of Nashville on Old Hickory Boulevard. Although many people could not see any opportunity coming from the rocky hillside, Pastor Hardwick was steadfast in his faith and believed the church was being lead to build there; and

WHEREAS, Christ Church enlisted the expertise of Brentwood architect, Bill Shelton, to design the new building, and the members began worshipping at the new site in 1977; and

WHEREAS, within the first three years of moving to the new location, Christ Church experienced an influx of people from varied denominational backgrounds, blending a classical

Pentecostal style of worship with a more traditional worship for a truly unique religious experience; and

WHEREAS, through all of the many changes, one constant that fueled the surging membership and maintained a unity in the church was the Christ Church Choir. Spearheaded by Landy Gardner, people have come from all over the nation to experience the unique and moving ministry of the Christ Church Choir; and

WHEREAS, another reason for the incredible growth of the church was the congregation's new focus on training and education during the early 1980s. Keeping with this new direction, Pastor Hardwick invited the country's finest speakers and teachers of various denominations to come and share their views and teachings with the congregation; and

WHEREAS, by 1986, 650 people were attending both Sunday morning services, in addition to experiencing growth in every other part of its ministry, making the facilities inadequate for the congregation. Bill Shelton's architectural expertise was needed once again to design a new sanctuary adjacent to the original one in 1988; and

WHEREAS, today, Christ Church enjoys an average weekly attendance approaching 4,000 people; it is listed among the 100 fastest growing churches in the United States and was featured in *The Great Churches of Tennessee*; and

WHEREAS, through all their unique endeavors, the good people that comprise Christ Church have given unselfishly of themselves, their time, and their talents to perpetuate God's Will; and

WHEREAS, one praiseworthy servant at Christ Church is L.H. Hardwick, Jr., who currently fulfills the prominent post of senior pastor, a position he has held for half a century; and

WHEREAS, appointed by the Governor of Tennessee to serve an eight-year term on the Board of Trustees of the Middle Tennessee Mental Health Association, Pastor Hardwick also lends his noteworthy talents to The Palaver Society, a group of twelve of Nashville's most influential churchmen, in addition to leading an interdenominational group of pastors from the

Nashville area. He has received honorary doctorate degrees from the Moody Theological Seminary and Emmanuel Bible College and currently serves on the Executive Board of Churches United in Global Missions; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Hardwick's ministry is enriched by Stan Mitchell, the assistant pastor; Landy Gardner, the choir director; J. Michael Gallagher, the communications director; Steve Hardwick, the operations director; Linda Hilliard, the director of Christian education; Kenny Mauck, the director of counseling ministries; and Tommy Scott, the missions and evangelism director; and

WHEREAS, the congregation at Christ Church has persevered through the past 50 years with patience and persistence, earnestly seeking the favor of the Lord in becoming an example to the world as a community of those who follow Christ; and

WHEREAS, throughout its many changes, the church has stalwartly held to the basic principles upon which it was founded a half century ago, remaining a Christian church, an evangelical church, a Spirit-led church, and a local church; and

WHEREAS, the past has been good to Christ Church, and the future promises to hold even more blessings for the good people who comprise the membership of the church's congregation. They personify Paul's words in I Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord"; and

WHEREAS, Christ Church is truly one of the great religious organizations and catalysts for positive, spiritual change in our state, and the members of this fine congregation should be appropriately honored for their exemplary service to their fellow Christians and to the good people of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we honor and congratulate the congregation at Christ Church on the celebration of its 50th anniversary and extend to them our best wishes for every future happiness in service to the Lord.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.